

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2931

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG, PK

SUBJ: BHUTTO'S VISIT

SUMMARY: FRIENDLY RECEPTION ACCORDED BHUTTO'S ARRIVAL JUNE 27 BY LARGE CROWDS OF CURIOUS BENGALLEES NOTABLE FOR TOTAL LACK OF ANY SIGNS OF HOSTILITY. AT OFFICIAL DINNER, SHEIKH MUJIB HEAVILY EMPHASIZED FORGIVDTASS OF BENGALLEES FOR PAST PAKISTANI DEPREDATIONS AND CALLED ON PAKISTAN TO RECIPROCATE, POINTING TO REPATRIATION OF BIHARIS AND FAIR DIVISION OF ASSETS AS THE WAY TO DO IT. MUJIB IS SAYING IN EFFECT THAT HIS GENEROSITY HAS BROUGHT PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH RECONCILIATION TM S FAR--NOW IT IS FOR BHUTTO'S GENEROSITY TO CARRY IT FORWARD. BHUTTO SPOKE IN LARGER GENERALITIES, FOCUSING ON FUTURE RELATIONS AND CHARACTERIZING TALKS IN DACCA AS BRIDGE TO THAT FUTURE. BOTH LEADERS EVINCED FRIENDLY, SERIOWS ATTITUDE TOWARD ONE ANOTNER. END SUMMARY.

1. PAKISTAN'S PRIME MINISTER ZULFIQUAR ALI BHUTTO ARRIVED IN DACCA JUNE 27 TO WARM RECEPTION BY MUJIB AT THE AIRPORT AND A FRIENDLY RESPONSE BY BENGALIS WHO LINED THE ROUTE FROM AIRPORT THROUGH DACCA TO THE PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE WHERE BHUTTO IS STAYING. THE CROWD, CONFIDENTIAL

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TWO TO SIX DEEP ALONG ENTIRE ROUTE, WERE CURIOUS AND EXPECTANT.

THEY APPLAUDED POLITELY AS THE LONG MOTORCADE PASSED AND SURGED FORWARD FOR A BETTER VIEW. THEY APPEARED TO RECOGNIZE AND OCCASIONALLY CHEER OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PAK DELEGATION IN FOLLOW-UP CARS. HERE AND THERE WERE SHOUTS OF PAKISTAN ZINDABAD. THERE WAS SOME EVIDENCE OF ANTI-INDIANISM IN THE WELCOME TO BHUTTO AS WELL AS THE DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CURRENT ECONOMIC STATE OF BANGLADESH. DESPITE REPORTS OF EXCEPTIONALLY TIGHT SECURITY, POLICE LINES FOR MOTORCADE WERE STANDARD. FOR REST OF VISIT, BHUTTO WILL EVIDENTLY TRAVEL BY HELICOPTER. THE DACCA PRESS YES-TERDAY TREATED ARRIVAL IN A STRAIGHT-FORWARD MANNER ON THE FRONT PAGE, BUT EDITORIALY AND ELSEWHERE THE EMPHASIS WAS UPON THE PAKISTANI SITUATION OF THE PAST AND THE GREAT GENEROSITY OF THE BENGALIS FORGIVENESS WHICH PAKISTAN HAD YET TO RECIPROCATE.; 5#3 043 :9,58,73\$ 59 0)-6 70 ?\$&'S DESIRE FOR PROGRESS ON THE BIHARI ISSUE AND DIVISION OF ASSETS SETTLEMENT.

2. AT BANQUET GIVEN BY MUJIB LAST NIGHT, THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS APPEARED TO CARRY ON FRIENDLY, UNSTRAINED CONVERSATION THROUGHOUT THE EVENING. IN HIS ADDRESS, MUJIB STRESSED HEAVILY AND EMOTIONALLY THE SUFFERINGS OF THE BENGALIS DURING 1971, ALTHOUGH SAYING BENGALIS SHUNNED REVENGE SO THAT THEY COULD LOOK FORWARD TO FULFILLING THE REVOLUTIONARY URGE TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE. MUJIB TOLD BHUTTO THAT HIS VISIT TOOK PLACE AGAINST A "BACKDROP OF TRAGIC AND HEARTRENDING MEMORIES," THAT BECAUSE OF THE "BLOODY WAR OF LIBERATION," THERE IS HARDLY A FAMILY IN THE "WAR RAVAGED LAND" WHO HAS NOT BORNE THE "AGONY OF SUPREME SACRIFICE." THE PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH "FROM THE MIDST OF THEIR DEVASTATED LAND" WELCOMED BHUTTO AND HIS ENTOURAGE. IN LAHORE, MUJIB SAID HE HAD SEEN SIGNS OF REPENTANCE AND REGRET IN THE EYES OF SOME PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN. THIS RHETORIC CONTINUED THROUGH THE BRIEF SPEECH AS MUJIB SAID THAT BENGALIS WERE MOVED BY FEELINGS OF FORGIVENESS TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR AND ADVANCE THE GENUINE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. GETTING TO HIS MAIN POINTS, MUJIB SAID THAT THE RARE MAGNANIMITY OF THE BENGALIS MUST BE FULLY RECIPROCATED BY THE PAKISTANIS TAKING POSITIVE STEPS IN THE SAME SPIRIT. THOUSANDS OF PAKISTANIS REMAIN IN BANGLADESH. THEIR FUTURE DEPENDS ON "THE VISION AND SAGACITY WHICH YOU MAY BRING TO BEAR ON THEIR SITUATION". THOSE WHO HAVE VOLUNTARILY CONFIRMED INDISSOLUBLE TIES WITH PAKISTAN ARE NOW ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THE HOUR WHEN THEY MAY BE REPATRIATED TO PAKISTAN. WE MUST NOT ALLOW,

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MUJIB SAID, HUMAN CONSIDERATIONS TO BE SUBMERGED BY CONSIDERATION OF DIPLOMATIC ADVANTAGE OR POLITICAL CONVENIENCE. IN ADDITION, MUJIB MENTIONED THAT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE QUESTION OF THE DIVISION OF ASSETS WOULD MATERIALLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS.

3. BHUTTO RESPONDED IN EQUALLY EMOTIONAL TERMS BUT AVOIDED ANY SUBSTANTIVE REFERENCES. THE PAKISTANIS HAD COME TO DACCA WITH

"GAZE FIXED FIRMLY ON THE FUTURE," DETERMINED TO TRANSCEND THE "TRAUMATIC MEMORIES OF THE PAST" IN ORDER TO STRIVE TOGETHER TO REALIZE THE SHARED ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF BOTH COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH THEY COULD NOT FORGET THE PAST, THE SINS OF OMISSION, THE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES THAT MIGHT HAVE REVERSED THE MARCH TO FRATRICIDAL CONFLICT AS WELL AS THE CRIMES OF COMMISSION, "OUR SOULS HAVE BEEN SEARED AND TORTURED ENOUGH ALREADY." HE THEN DWELT UPON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF DACCA'S ROLE IN PAKISTAN HISTORY AND HOPED THIS ROLE WOULD CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE TO BRING PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH CLOSER TOGETHER, TO GENUINE RECONCILIATION AND FRATERNAL COOPERATION. BHUTTO STRESSED THAT BANGLADESH'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES ARE ITS OWN AFFAIR. GOP HAS SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED AND WILL CONTINUE TO AVOID ANY INTERFERENCE WHATSOEVER IN THE INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF BANGLADESH.

4. BHUTTO IS SCHEDULED TO LAY A WREATH TODAY AT THE MONUMENT TO THE MARTYRS OF 1971 AT SAVAR OUTSIDE OF DACCA. IN ADDITION TO TALKS WITH MUJIB, HE WILL ATTEND A CIVIC RECEPTION THIS AFTERNOON AND GIVE A DINNER THIS EVENING. SATURDAY IS DEVOTED TO FURTHER TALKS.

5. COMMENT: MUJIB'S SPEECH FULLY CONFIRMED THE OFFICIAL AND PRESS PLAY THAT PRECEDED THE VISIT: THE RECOLLECTION OF PAST HORRORS, THE GENEROSITY OF THE BENGALIS IN FORGIVING PAKISTAN, THE NEED FOR PAKISTAN TO RECIPROCATATE THROUGH ACCEPTING THE BIHARIS AND DIVIDING THE ASSETS FAIRLY. BHUTTO'S RESPONSE ALSO CONTINUED PAKISTAN'S NON-SPECIFIC APPROACH TO THE VISIT. THE FRIENDLINESS OF THE CROWDS WAS ANTICIPATED; THE LACK OF ANY SIGNS OF HOSTILITY WAS A LITTLE SURPRISING. THE VISIT HAS DIVERTED ATTENTION FROM WIDESPREAD SPECULATION AND REPORTS THAT AWAMI LEAGUE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JULY 2 WILL LIKELY RESULT IN AT LEAST A CABINET RESHUFFLE. THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE DRASTIC CHANGES, SUCH AS PRESIDENTIAL RULE OR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES GIVING MUJIB

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EVEN GREATER CENTRALIZED CONTROL. THE CONTEMPLATED CHANGES ARE IN PART A RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC ATTITUDE THAT ALSO MADE BHUTTO WELCOME HERE: DISSATISFACTION WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND A SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD PROVIDE FOR A BETTER FUTURE, BE IT A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE OR RENEWED TIES WITH PAKISTAN.
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